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PART I

INDO-CHINA

I - THE PROBLEM

To set forth a program of action without resort to overt combat operations by U.S. forces, designed to: (a) secure the military defeat of Communist forces in Indo-China, and (b) establish a western oriented complex in Southeast Asia incorporating Indo-China, Thailand, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

II - MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS

(A) Indo-China is considered the keystone of the arch of Southeast Asia, and the Indo-Chinese peninsula must not be permitted to fall under Communist domination. This requires the defeat in Indo-China of military and quasi-military Communist forces and the development of conditions conducive to successful resistance to any Communist actions to dominate the area. Measures taken in Indo-China, however, must be in consonance with U.S. and allied action taken in the Far East and Southeast Asia to defeat Communist efforts to extend their control of the area.

(B) Feasible actions to provide for the immediate U.S. assistance requested by the French for operations in the Dien Bien Phu-Central Laos sector have been taken. The measures recommended herein will hardly affect the immediate tactical situation in those areas (which, while serious, is not as critical as public pronouncements suggest). They are designed to effect a general improvement in the over-all situation in Indo-China,

NSC review(s) completed.

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which is such that all actions must be considered a matter of urgency to be implemented without delay. They are also designed to achieve the desired results in Indo-China without overt involvement by U.S. combat forces.

(C) The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Central Intelligence Agency have developed a program of support for the Navarre Plan in Indo-China. This plan considers certain basic immediate requirements for continued U.S. support for Franco-Vietnamese operations and some of these recommendations have been implemented. The remaining actions have been incorporated hereunder in paragraph III (A). However, there is implicit in many of these proposals a requirement for a stronger French political and military effort as well as more effective support for Vietnamese participation. The alternative to more precise and extensive action by the French and Vietnamese, as proposed by the U.S., appears to be a continued stalemate or debacle in Indo-China.

(D) It would appear that France cannot withdraw her forces from Indo-China without serious deterioration of her position as a world power.

(E) The key to the success of military operations continues to be the generation of well-trained, properly led indigenous forces effectively employed in combat operations against the Communist forces in Viet Minh. The eventual goal must be the development of homogenous indigenous units with a native officer corps. In this the French have had, for whatever reason, insufficient success. Such success will ultimately be dependent upon the inspiration of the local population to fight for their own freedom from Communist domination and the willingness of the French both to take the measures to stimulate that inspiration and to make fully utilize the native

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potential. At the same time, French sensitivities with respect to their sacrifices, responsibilities, and capabilities must be respected, as we persuade and assist them to correct existing deficiencies.

(F) The U.S. objective in Indo-China should be centralized U.S. control and coordination of all U.S. military, military aid, and "unconventional warfare" (which includes psychological warfare, guerrilla warfare, and certain aspects of pacification operations) mechanisms in Indo-China.

(G) There is in Indo-China, or programmed for Indo-China (and anticipating continued U.S. assistance) a sufficient amount of equipment and supplies and a potential manpower pool sufficient eventually to defeat the Communists decisively if properly utilized and maintained and if the situation continues to permit this manpower to be converted into military effectiveness. In their own report the French have acknowledged that U.S. aid in many areas has exceeded French capacity to absorb it.

(H) Measures advocated by the U.S. must be so characterized by determination, strength, confidence, and justice that they serve to enhance the support of all Asians who seek freedom, both from Communist domination and western colonization. Asians must be convinced that they will have a far better future with the Free World than under Communism and that there is not to be reinstitution of colonialism.

(I) The Communists in Indo-China, Southeast Asia, China, and Moscow must be made aware that the United States, France, and the free governments of the Far East are united, steadfast, and capable of accomplishing their aims.

(J) The U.S. must take the initiative in persuading the French and Vietnamese to overcome these deficiencies. Such initiative must, however,

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avoid French exploitation in its unilateral interest and must avoid actions which will lead to involuntary U.S. combat participation.

III - ACTIONS REQUIRED

(A) The Joint Chiefs of Staff, in coordination with the Central Intelligence Agency, have recommended certain courses of action which are susceptible of immediate implementation. Of those not already undertaken, the following should be completed as a matter of urgency:

1. The French air forces in Indo-China should be augmented, particularly with respect to air and ground-crew personnel from military and/or civilian resources within the framework of the French Vietnamese armed forces. Steps should be taken through existing contacts with the French Government to satisfy these requirements; to explore the possibilities of establishing a volunteer air group; and to make the necessary arrangements to replace the uniformed U.S. military personnel being temporarily assigned to assist the French in maintenance functions.

Action: Defense

2. The present arrangements for the assignment of U.S. officials to Indo-China should be altered to include the assignment of additional representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency to an appropriate U.S. activity in the area.

Action: Defense, CIA

3. A source of funds in the amount of \$124 millions to meet additional urgent requirements for Indo-China for all services must be determined. Currently for FY 1954 there has been provided to the

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French effort in Indo-China a total of \$1,115 millions in military assistance, defense support, and military support projects. Unless a source of funds other than MDAP is made available to meet these additional requirements, the materiel action and training support for Indo-China will have to come at the expense of the world-wide FY 1954 MDA program.

Action: Defense

(B) The present situation in Indo-China, however, indicates that in addition to the immediate actions outlined above, the following steps must be taken as a matter of priority:

Politically

1. As a result of events which have occurred during recent weeks, and particularly in the light of the forthcoming Geneva Convention, certain actions which might have been susceptible of direct negotiation with the French Government now require more circumspect negotiation. Nonetheless, it should remain the U.S. objective to obtain French active acceptance formally or informally of the following:

a. Modification of the mission of the U.S. MAAG, Indo-China, to provide for expanded strength, including a planning staff (composed initially of up to 10 highly selected officer personnel); authority to conduct liaison with senior training and planning staff sections; and authority to make recommendations concerning the conduct of operations. This relationship may be justified entirely within the framework of the present agreement with the French Government that "the French Government

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will continue to facilitate exchanges of information and views on a continuing basis between French and U.S. military authorities and will take into account the views expressed by the latter with respect to the development and carrying out of the French strategic plans without in any way, of course, detracting from exclusive French responsibility for adoption and execution thereof." It should be presented that the U.S. has complete confidence that France can win the struggle against the Communists in Indo-China and that expanded U.S. representation at the French Headquarters is designed to provide the maximum and most effective assistance in aiding the French to achieve common free world objectives in Indo-China.

b. Gradual assignment of additional U.S. personnel up to a level of 50 specially qualified personnel in Indo-China as such assignments become feasible. These individuals should have the mission of acting as instructors, principally with the Vietnamese forces and in non-combat areas as recommended by the Chief, MAAG, and concurred in by the local Commander.

c. Expanded utilization of U.S. covert assets, particularly in the unconventional warfare field and particularly in bilateral US-Associated States unconventional warfare operations.

Action: State, Defense, CIA

2. It should also be a U.S. objective to seek (both with the active French and other appropriate governments as well as with the

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necessary U.S. authorities) the methods of attaining the following:

a. Modification of present Foreign Legion enlistment requirements with reduced enlistment period for service in Indo-China and expansion of the Foreign Legion to include the formation of air units.

b. Recruitment in certain foreign countries, especially Germany, Italy, and possibly Asia, of non-French personnel with appropriate technical qualifications for service in Indo-China with the Foreign Legion.

c. Provision of certain U.S. personnel, on a voluntary basis, for service in the French forces without sacrifice of their U.S. citizenship.

Action: Defense, State

3. In addition to the urgent actions outlined above, the following additional actions are suggested as contributing to the advancement of U.S. interests with respect to Indo-China:

a. The U.S. should continue to stress and emphasize in every way our purpose in helping the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos through the French is to maintain their independence, and should reiterate our position regarding that independence.

Action: Operations Coordinating Board

b. A vigorous U.S. effort might be made to restore Bao Dai's health and to persuade him and possibly the King of

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Cambodia to take a more active part in the struggle against the Viet Minh. This effort should include action designed to encourage Bao Dai to withdraw from his semi-isolation to visit his troops, to reside in his capital and otherwise to comport himself like a dynamic Chief of State. This effort might be correlated with measures designed to have some U. S. military assistance delivered directly to the Associated States instead of through the French. Such action might appropriately be taken upon the conclusion of or during the latter phases of the Geneva conference.

Action: Operations Coordinating Board

Militarily

1. A general officer of two-star rank, as designated by the Department of Defense, should be appointed Chief, MAAG, Indo-China, upon relief of the present Chief in February 1954. He will be subject to the coordination of the U. S. Ambassador to Indo-China, but will be under the military command of U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Pacific. He will command all U.S. military personnel and covert assets in Indo-China relative to his mission and will be personally responsible for preventing the involvement of uniformed U.S. personnel in combat.

2. Subsequent to the receipt of French governmental approval (and desirably at their invitation), but at the earliest possible time, the Chief, MAAG, Indo-China, should be provided with necessary staff sections, and assigned additional duties involving expanded

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liaison with the French and Vietnam forces. He should be directed and authorized to advise and assist the Franco-Vietnamese command in training and planning, and to make recommendations concerning the conduct of operations. In this connection he should urgently seek the following:

a. Development and implementation of a sound concept and operational plan for the conduct of operations in Indo-China.

b. Intensive and aggressive operations with a view to winning a victory of consequence at the earliest time, and exploitation of this success politically and psychologically.

c. Effective pacification of French-Vietnamese held areas, emphasizing security of individuals and property through proper utilization of defense groups and guards and institution of adequate local civil administration.

d. Training and properly equipping Vietnam units with emphasis upon the institution of adequate officer, NCO, and technical training courses.

e. Improvement in intelligence and security agencies.

f. Expansion of unconventional warfare operations.

Action: Defense, CIA, FQA

3. Concurrently with the tasks assigned above, arrangements should be made to develop an over-all concept designed to achieve the subjugation of Communist forces in Indo-China and the pacification of the area. This concept should be provided the Chief, MAAG,

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Indo-China, as guidance in seeking the accomplishment of the task assigned in paragraph 2 above.

Action: Defense, CIA

Information and Psychological

1. Concurrently with the political and military actions outlined above, and under the coordination of the Operations Coordinating Board, a specific domestic and foreign information campaign should be developed and maintained, particularly for the period leading up to the Geneva conference, to de-emphasize "hysteria" publicity, and to bring about widespread recognition of and appropriate attention to the following themes:

a. France, in supporting the fight of the Associated States of Indo-China against Communist domination, is the principal nation now shedding its blood for the freedom of others.

b. The French Government has made major sacrifices in terms of its young military manpower, its economic resources, and its political position in order to defend the cause of liberty and freedom from Communism in Indo-China.

c. The French Government has accepted the principle of self government and sovereignty for the Associated States of Indo-China and has in fact more than satisfied the initial demands of Ho Chi Minh, thus providing evidence that the Viet Minh are fighting not for freedom but for the Communist cause.

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d. The cause of the Associated States of Indo-China is the cause of all countries in South Asia who desire freedom from Communist domination and self determination with respect to their political and economic objectives.

e. The cause of Viet Minh as with all Communists is the cause of colonization and subservience to Kremlin rule as was the cause in China, in North Korea and in the European satellites.

Action: State, Defense, CIA, USIA

2. A specific U.S. psychological warfare program for Indo-China should be developed immediately, including overt and covert projects, under Operations Coordinating Board coordination, with paramount emphasis on the establishment of a climate of opinion which associates all outside support with the achievement of Indo-Chinese national aspirations. Benefit will accrue from U.S. courses of action in direct proportion to the degree they are implemented through indigenous peoples rather than through direct support of the French. The U.S. psychological warfare program should therefore provide for the following:

a. The establishment under the U.S. Ambassador to Indo-China of an operations advisory group, including representatives of the U.S. Military Mission in Indo-China, the Department of State, the Foreign Operations Administration and the Central Intelligence Agency as appropriate to coordinate the non-military

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aspects of U.S. psychological operations within Indo-China. The Chief, MAAG, Indo-China, should be responsible for coordinating all psychological warfare activities directly relative to his expanded mission with this group.

Action: State, Defense, CIA, FOA, USIA

b. Appropriate psychological warfare equipment and supplies should be assigned to the French and Vietnam forces, and key technical personnel should be assigned to the MAAG for such use as the Chief, MAAG, may desire.

Action: Defense, CIA, FOA

c. A specific mechanism should be established within the U.S. to provide for the orientation of all official U.S. personnel assigned to duty or visiting Indo-China so that maximum favorable psychological effect is derived from all their activities and contacts.

Action: Operations Coordinating Board

d. Development of indigenous leadership which will be truly representative and symbolic of Indo-Chinese national aspirations and win the loyalty and support of the people.

Action: State, Defense, CIA

e. Subsidization of indigenous newspapers and public information media, including provision of equipment and supplies as well as air transport to remote population centers.

Action: CIA, USIA

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f. Upon establishment of necessary agreements with the French Government as prescribed above, augmentation of the US-Vietnam guerrilla warfare potential in Indo-China.

Action: Defense, CIA

IV - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(A) If the above actions can be completed at an early date with full French support (and on the assumption that the Chinese Communists do not intervene overtly in Indo-China), it is considered that this program will have the effect of reversing the present situation and give promise of leading to an ultimate victory in Indo-China without overt use of U.S. military forces.

(B) However, should the immediate situation in Indo-China deteriorate drastically or should French intransigence make the substantial accomplishment of the program outlined herein impossible, the U.S. may wish to consider direct military action in Southeast Asia to ensure the maintenance of our vital interests in the area. Under such circumstances, an area concept including Malaya, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, and the Philippines, as well as Indo-China, would appear essential. These ramifications are to be considered in Part II of this study as assigned to the Special Committee.

(C) It is recommended that this program be approved by the Operations Coordinating Board and submitted to the President for immediate implementation.

(D) It is recommended that the Department of Defense develop, for the immediate attention of the Special Committee, a concept of operations and considerations involved in the use of U.S. armed forces in Indo-China, should such involvement be determined upon.

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